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AT THE RING OF THE SCHOOL LUNCH BELL

Broadcast by Ruth Van Deman, Bureau of Human Nutrition and Home Economics, and Marc Gordon, Food Distribution Administration, in the Department of Agriculture's portion of the National Farm and Home Hour, Tuesday, January 4, 1944, over stations associated with the Blue Network.

RUTH VAN DEMAN: This is back-to-school week for millions of youngsters in the U.S.A. From time to time we've reported to you how the Food Distribution Administration is helping with school lunches. To bring us up to date on that program Marc Gordon is here with us today. Mr. Gordon is with the Civilian Requirements Branch, which has immediate charge of the school lunch program. Then I have some news for you, too, about our new booklet of school lunch recipes. But more of that later. Mr. Gordon, how about your taking a turn and telling us how the school lunch program is working out.

MARC GORDON: I'd say it's working very well. Right now, about 4 million children are getting school lunches in this program.

VAN DEMAN: With the Government's help in buying the food. Is that the ceiling for this school year - 4 million children?

GORDON: No. We expect the number will be up to six million by February.

VAN DEMAN: That is good news many youngsters, I think, find January, February, and March the long hard pull of the school year. They need plenty of good food to help them over the hump.

GORDON: That's exactly the way the War Food Administration feels about it. It's no news, of course, to any of us that military, lend-lease, and other demands on our food supply are terrific. That's part of global warfare. But the needs of growing children here at home can't be overlooked either. And they are not being overlooked by the Government in its food plans.

VAN DEMAN: What's been the effect, if any, of women going into war jobs - that is, mothers with children in school?

GORDON: One result is the children have more money to spend for their lunches. But money isn't the whole answer to a good lunch - not for a youngster of school age.

VAN DEMAN: That reminds me of something I heard the other day about a little girl from a very well-to-do family. She lunches every day on 2 doughnuts and a bottle of soda pop.

GORDON: There you are. Does her school have a good lunchroom?

VAN DEMAN: No, I think she buys her lunch at the corner store.

GORDON: That's one of the big problems, especially with youngsters from families where all the grown-ups are working. Or where swing shifts and other work schedules don't give a mother time to look out for her children in the regular way.

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The organized school lunchroom is the only way to make sure the children get the right food.

VAN DEMAN: And the rightly organized school lunchroom gives the same service to the children who pay and those who can't pay.

GORDON: Yes. That's one of the principles of the school lunch program. We can't overlook the fact that there are still millions of children whose parents can't afford to pay for their lunches. War has brought jobs to many, but not to all. Now, Miss Van Deman, I'd like to ask you about the new school lunch recipes.

VAN DEMAN: Fair enough - go ahead.

GORDON: Have you any recipes there using soya flour and grits?

VAN DEMAN: Yes, 15 or 20.

GORDON: Fine. The school lunch is proving to be an excellent place to introduce new foods.

VAN DEMAN: You find that children like to try new foods?

GORDON: Yes, if they're served in the school lunchroom where there's the fun of eating what the other fellows are eating.

VAN DEMAN: By the way, how are the school lunches getting along under rationing?

GORDON: Very well generally. Schools receive points on about the same basis as restaurants and other commercial eating establishments. Right now the O.P.A. is making it easier for schools to get more points as they serve a better lunches.

VAN DEMAN: Better from the nutrition standpoint.

GORDON: Yes.

VAN DEMAN: These recipes can be a help on that. They're geared to rationing and to wartime food supplies. And they're geared also to the standards for lunches the Food Distribution Administration set up.

GORDON: The purpose of those standards of course is to make sure children get nutritious lunches lunches as good as nutrition experts could plan if they were on the spot.

VAN DEMAN: We've tried to follow that same line in working out the recipes. They're reasonably low-cost. But they are highly nutritious. And they're mighty good eating.

GORDON: Speaking of the way the children go after their food, I'd like to read you part of a letter from a school lunch helper in Pennsylvania.

VAN DEMAN: Fine.

GORDON: "If you want an experience that is different from washing dishes at home three times a day help serve a hot lunch at school. Go into the primary

room and notice the clean towel on every desk, the dish set out in readiness, the sparkle in the eyes of the children. Or go to the upper room and hear the greetings of 'Bring on the grub!' or 'Come on, we're ready for it!' in tones of approval. I'm sure you will go home feeling that after all it was worth the effort."

VAN DEMAN: Well, we hope this school lunch program can put the sparkle into more children's eyes and thank you very much, Mr. Gordon, for giving us news about the program from the F.D.A. angle. We hope you'll come back again.

GORDON: I'll be glad to.

VAN DEMAN: And, Farm and Home friends, let me give you the title of this new bulletin. "School Lunch Recipes." It's a booklet of about 200 recipes and cooking suggestions for the people working in the school lunchroom. The recipes are in quantities for 12, 25, and 50 servings. If you belong to the school lunch committee and want recipes of this kind we'll be glad to send you the booklet. Address your card to Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C. Ask for School Lunch Recipes.

